



January 2010

Happy New Year to everyone! January brings a sense of renewal and an opportunity to reflect on our past missteps and successes and map out a plan to make the coming year the best yet. Regarding accidents, our Army had a pretty good year in 2009. In fact, it was the best year since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. We can do even better in 2010 by taking a look at where we've been, finding those areas we can improve and renewing our commitment to keeping our great Soldiers, our "Band of Brothers and Sisters," safe in the months and years ahead.

Here's a broad look at the numbers for fiscal 2009. Overall, Army fatalities were down 16 percent from fiscal 2008, with a reduction of just over 42 percent for the five-year period since the beginning of fiscal 2005. That's great news for the Soldiers, Families and civilians who make up our Army team and for engaged Leaders who have put forth great effort to drive down unnecessary losses.

We cannot allow positive statistics to lull us into complacency, however. The bottom line is 173 Soldiers were killed in accidents in fiscal 2009, the vast majority of them in off-duty privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents. Although both POV and motorcycle fatalities were down by about 13 percent in 2009, two specific factors — alcohol and/or speed — contributed to more than half these accidents. We also didn't reduce accidents across the board in 2009; fatalities in both Army Motor Vehicles and Army Combat Vehicles rose slightly from numbers logged in 2008.

We saw in 2009 that engaged leadership at all levels of command does indeed work in keeping our Soldiers safe and mission-ready. We've also learned Soldier-to-Soldier and direct Family engagement are vital to our safety programs. Leaders, please continue to search within your formations for those areas that need improvement while simultaneously strengthening your proven safety practices. I encourage all Leaders to utilize our Leader Risk Assessment, Individual Risk Assessment and the soon-to-be-released "Soldier-to-Soldier" Assessments to gain insights into their formations and develop a way ahead.

Our problems with off-duty Soldier indiscipline call for Leaders to personally engage their Soldiers regarding individual responsibility in off-duty activities, particularly behind the wheel of a POV. Similar effort is needed on the tactical side, where fatal accidents involving speed and nonuse of restraint systems remain an all-too-common occurrence. "Safety sense" while driving is especially important during this time of year, when many of our Soldiers will encounter snow and ice conditions in both their personal and tactical vehicles.

I am confident we can capitalize on this past year's many safety successes and make 2010 an even safer year for our total Army Family. A strong team effort and steadfast dedication to safety are proven winners in our strategy to eliminate needless losses, and the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center stands ready to help as you renew your commitment to Soldier safety in 2010 and beyond.

Thank you for all you do to make each and every day safe for our Soldiers, Families and civilians. Have a happy, prosperous and safe new year!

**Army Safe is Army Strong!**

WILLIAM T. WOLF  
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Commanding